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XV.—THE COMEDIES OF J. C. KRÜGER.

When the critics of the middle of the eighteenth century discuss the conditions of the German stage at that time, they invariably complain of the great losses caused to it by the untimely death of several young and promising authors. Brawe, Cronegk, and J. E. Schlegel are mentioned in this way; and their names are still remembered, if their works are forgotten. Together with these we repeatedly find a name that nowadays seems almost to have dropped out of the memory of the historians of literature. Yet the young Nicolai¹ was just as eager to praise Johann Christian Krüger as those other three men, and regretted that he, too, by a premature death, had been prevented from fulfilling what his early productions had promised. For a long time confused with Gottsched's unlucky disciple, B. E. Krüger,² Johann Christian Krüger's personality and writings only now begin to be understood.³

We have from Krüger several *Lustspiele*, lyrical poems, and a certain number of those "*Vorspiele*," without which the public of those days would not have been satisfied. As to them the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften* states: "The greatest merit of a *Vorspiel* is to be appropriate to the circumstances for which it is intended, and for the playwright to succeed in choosing a pleasing allegory that suits the conditions of the time and locality; when these conditions cease to exist, the *Vorspiel* loses its interest." Those by Krüger

¹ Nicolai, *Briefe über den itzigen Zustand der schönen Wissenschaften in Deutschland*, 1755, p. 120; also *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften* (1764), x, 241; *Hannoversches Magazin*, Montag den 28. Martii, 1768; Jördens, *Lexicon deutscher Dichter und Prosaisten*, Leipzig, 1808, v. 3; and of course Loewen's introduction to Krüger's *Poetische und theatralische Schriften*, Leipzig, 1763.

² Cf. Danzel, *Gottsched*, p. 166.

³ Vogt und Koch, *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte*,¹ p. 130.

are declared to be "still among the most tolerable of the German stage."¹

His lyrical poems—hymns, epigrams, and other poems—hardly rank higher. Some of them were published in the *Sammlung vermischter Schriften, von den Verfassern der Bremischen neuen Beyträge*, and several of his religious poems found their way into the hymnals of the time.²

For all these reasons it is sufficient to examine Krüger's *Lustspiele*, in order to determine what place he occupies in the history of German literature.

All eighteenth century critics are unanimous in affirming that these comedies do not strictly belong to the same class as those of Gottsched's school. Jördens says that Krüger offended the Leipzig dictator by his translation of Marivaux's comedies, and that in his own writings he tried to follow the example set by Molière. A brief review of Gottsched's connections with the origin of the modern German comedy will make the meaning of these statements clearer.

Gottsched, in his reform of the German stage, concentrated nearly all his energy upon the promotion of tragedy. He had himself a great admiration for every kind of stately and conventional dignity and had not the slightest sense of humor. He therefore sympathized more or less with Boileau's reluctance to admit Molière in all of his writings as the equal of Corneille.³

So it was left to Frau Gottsched to devote her wit and common sense to the abandoned cause of the German comedy.

¹ Further details about these *Vorspiele* in Hans Devrient, *Johann Friedrich Schönmemann* (Litzmann's *Theatergeschichtliche Forschungen*, XI), *passim*.

² Those beginning with the words: "Entfernet euch, unsel'ge Spötter;" "Wie mächtig spricht in meiner Seele;" and "Der Herr des Guten ist mein Hirte" (G. L. Ritter, *Allgemeines Biographisches Lexicon alter und neuer geistlicher Liederdichter*, Leipzig, 1804, p. 180). Heerwagen (*Litteraturgeschichte des evangelischen Kirchenliedes*, Neustadt an der Aisch, 1792, I, 270) says that "Wie mächtig," &c., is to be found in the *Anspacher und Braunschweiger Gesangbuch*.

³ *Art poétique*, III, ll. 393-400.

She was far more successful in her attempts than her husband in his *Atalanta* or even *Cato*. She felt less limited in the free exercise of her natural gifts than her husband by his programme. And the models she imitated had not yet arrived at that state of rigorous conventionality which characterizes the classical French tragedy of the eighteenth century.¹ The French comedy had followed the evolution of the century also in its form, and thus had kept in closer touch with real life. It had changed, developed, perhaps even progressed. So Frau Gottsched's models are less to be sought among the comedies of the *siècle de Louis Quatorze* than among their numerous French and foreign successors: Destouches, Addison, Holberg,—if we omit less important authors, like Bougeant.

The Saxon comedy undoubtedly gained by these facts. But, on the other hand, their good influence was seriously hampered by this other fact, that nothing is more intimately connected with the social institutions and manners of national life than comedy.² And for a long time the great drawback of all these Saxon comedies was destined to be, that their authors studied characters in books and not in real life. For there was an enormous difference between the public of France and the public of Germany. The French aristocracy with its over-refined taste had given to the eighteenth century comedy a morbid elegance and delicacy, which the Saxon writers tried to imitate. But they all belonged to the middle classes, and wrote for a public of the same standing. This German public hardly can be said to have had at that moment any past at all; it could have only a future. And this future entirely depended upon whether the German writers should succeed in awakening the enormous amount of unconscious, untrained, brute force that patiently waited for its moment to come. Marivaux's subtle psychology certainly was not able to do this.

¹ Faguet, *Histoire de la littérature française*, Paris, 1900, II, 209.

² Cf. the advice given to a young Frenchman: Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, *La Femme au 18^{me} siècle*, Paris,³ 1890, p. 390.

³ Weiss's uneasiness when in Paris: Minor, *Chr. F. Weiss*, Innsbruck, 1880, p. 35.

There are some attempts to use the form of the French comedy for a picture of life and manners different from those that the Parisian public experienced every day. One is astonished to see in Gottsched's *Schaubühne* translations from Holberg's comedies, where the middle class and even the populace play such an important and merry part. Here Harlequin reappears under the name of Peter¹ or Heinrich, Colombine is called Catherine, and both look as healthy and unrefined as possible. Drunken men stagger over the stage and stammer grotesque nonsense, and even the cries of the oyster women are heard, selling their shellfish before the *Kannegiesser's* house. Equally astonishing is an attempt of Frau Gottsched's to give absolute life-resemblance and to portray entirely unconventional manners and modes of speech. In her *Pietisterei im Fischbeinrocke* a Frau Ehrlichin, "eine gemeine Bürgersfrau," gives a scolding in genuine *Plattdeutsch* to the Tartuffe that has seduced her daughter.² This use of the dialect is entirely new. Individualization of language had, in the French comedy, no other purpose than to make ridiculous the person using it. In this way Molière, Regnard, Marivaux, and others used their conventional patois for their Scapins, Harlequins or Colins. Frau Ehrlichin talks *plattdeutsch*, because this is her natural language, not because she has to be ridiculous; and her honest and straightforward indignation is only too refreshing after the over-dignified speeches of the *Obrist*, who is the *raisonneur* of the play.³

But these innovations were not only opposed to Gottsched's programme of a purified comedy. Besides what he would have called their coarseness and vulgarity, there was another reason why these attempts to portray real life remained isolated. Comedy in those days meant satire; and it was rather dangerous to show an independent judgment on the abuses

¹ R. Prutz, *Ludwig Holberg*, Stuttgart and Augsburg, 1857, p. 234.

² Schlenther, *Frau Gottsched*, Berlin, 1886, p. 147.

³ In some respects Heinrich Borkenstein's *Bookesbeutel* belongs to this class of plays.

of the time. It is known what an outcry arose when Gellert published his really harmless *Betschwester*, and how even men like Haller declared such attacks against religion as dangerous and irreverent. J. E. Schlegel was persuaded by his father to burn the manuscript of a comedy whose realism might have brought serious troubles upon his family.¹ The servility of Frau Gottsched's *Ungleiche Heirat*, or the innocent caricature of the two rival schools in poetry in Weisse's *Poeten nach der Mode*, was the only kind of satire permitted to the well-behaved citizen of those times. The influence of the *comédie larmoyante*, with its moralizing psychology and its spirit of patience and meekness, contributed to this attenuation of the satire. And so we have in Gellert's comedies typical representatives of private vice or misbehavior, that incarnate one isolated psychological trait of character, which is naïvely indicated by their names, carried before them like labels. With him the subject of the Saxon comedy has become as trifling as possible; the scope of its satire is as narrow as one could imagine; and the plots are nearly always void of interest and completely uncomical. Certainly there is a wide difference between these comedies and Molière's portraits of the Marquis² or Le Sage's denunciation of the *financier*.³

Those were the conditions prevailing, when Krüger began his career. For various reasons he had no obligation to submit to the esthetic and political rules of this form of comedy. He was united by friendship with the *Bremer Beyträger*; and so he did not exactly belong to Gottsched's school. His translation of Marivaux's comedies is reported to have excited the wrath of the Leipzig Professor. But it was rather experience and life than Marivaux's example that directed Krüger's attention to the practical needs of the stage and to the description of German things and German institutions.

¹ Wolff, *J. E. Schlegel*, Berlin, 1889, pp. 88 ff. The title of the play was *Die Pracht zu Landheim*.

² For instance in the *Misanthrope*.

³ In *Turcaret*.

Johann Christian Krüger was of a very poor family and one problem which he, during his short and unhappy life, never solved, was how to secure a living and to have time for study and literary work. He was born in Berlin, in 1722. In 1733 he entered the *Gymnasium zum grauen Kloster*,¹ and on the 15th of October, 1741, he was inscribed at the University of Frankfurt a. O., where he studied theology, the only study he could afford to attempt. Jördens also speaks of Halle, which is rather probable, since Krüger in his comedies likes to mention this university. Extreme poverty forced him to interrupt his studies and to apply in his native city for a *Bedienung*. Owing to lack of influence and of self-confidence, he failed in this, and had to live in the most miserable fashion by writing *Gelegenheitsgedichte*. At this juncture, in 1742, Schönnemann and his troupe of actors were in Berlin. The young student sought a refuge by joining it. Schönnemann was only too glad to add to his company a man of literary ability. After Krüger thus "mounted the stage instead of the pulpit," his life was intimately connected with the wanderings of Schönnemann's band, for which he wrote his *Vorspiele* and probably also most of his later comedies. Yet his situation was still far from comfortable. His desire for education, and the need of earning money, in addition to his small salary, took all the time which his obligations as a comedian left him. Being of delicate health, he could not stand this enormous strain of overwork; he died of consumption in Hamburg, the 23rd of August, 1750.²

Our descriptions of Krüger's acting are all full of praise. Jördens states that he "was a good actor. He took with success such rôles as demand a vivid fire, a certain haughtiness, and a noble pride" on the part of the actor. He, therefore, usually took the "part of kings, tyrants, and persons of exalted standing in the higher comedy. Although he was

¹ Devrient, *l. c.*, p. 67.

² About the date in Schmidt, *Chronologie des deutschen Theaters*, p. 148, see Devrient, *l. c.*, p. 179. Jördens and Meusel both give the 23rd.

too serious for ridiculous rôles in comedies, he did not entirely fail in the part of the *Avare*, *Tartuffe* or *Herzog Michel*, because the comic element here could be perceived in spite of his gloomy mien or counterfeited bashfulness." Schmidt (*Chronologie*, p. 104) says that the sound of his voice was "hollow;" and the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften* (x, 241) adds that this did not prevent him from pleasing on the stage, "because there was always found in him a thinking actor." Küttner, in his *Charactere deutscher Dichter und Prosäisten, Von Kaiser Karl dem Grossen bis aufs Jahr 1780* (Berlin, 1781) calls him (p. 296) "an excellent actor."¹

As to his personal character, we can easily conjecture that his irritability and his gloomy haughtiness—traits of character common among the authors of comedies—were hardly of advantage to a man in his circumstances. He apparently was not a person of smooth and pleasing manners, who took life easily and made other people feel easy in his company. He had no gift of making himself agreeable to others; his sincerity and relentless self-criticism made him both bashful and obstinate. In his earlier comedies we find a man of rather low extraction, honest and sincere in even the smallest details of life, opposing his corrupt environment with a stubborn, uncompromising virtue, and utterly unhappy and desperate on account of his absolute lack of humor; and we are permitted to divine that this *Wahrmund* and this *Herrmann* are portraits of Krüger's own personality. They both, like Krüger, belong by their inferior position to what Wustmann has called² the "*Gelehrten-Proletariat* of the 18th century." And their hidden virtues of righteousness and sincerity are in both cases appreciated by girls who see in them their teacher as well as their spiritual adviser, in a way closely resembling the relation which, as Löwen tells us, existed between Krüger and the *Demoiselle Schönnemann*, who later on became Löwen's own wife.

¹ Yet Devrient calls him a "mittelmässiger Schauspieler."

² Wustmann, *Aus Leipzig's Vergangenheit*, Neue Folge, Leipzig, 1898, pp. 236 ff. *passim*.

There is even a touch of Rousseau's gloom and of Robespierre's narrow righteousness in these two characters; and it will be shown soon that there is a strong revolutionary accent in Krüger's first comedies, and that they often reveal a frame of mind which we are accustomed to meet some forty years later, in the French revolution.

This side of Krüger's character was probably accentuated by the desperate conditions of his life. His poverty and his profession separated him from all the other writers of the day. They were either men of some means or at least persons who, coming from a good professional family, were provided with a regular situation in some office. They never felt, like Krüger, what it meant to be hungry. On the other hand, they had to be careful and not to offend influential persons who were always ready to suspect and to punish. Krüger as an actor was practically something like an outcast. And if, in the first place, he thus gained experience of life—for nothing reveals more clearly certain sides of life than misery—he was furthermore almost as free to express his opinions as at that time was possible. His knowledge of stagecraft was likewise less gained by books than was the case with other writers, such as Gellert. Hence it is not astonishing if Krüger did not care for Gottsched's crusade against Hanswurst, if he rather tried to reconcile literary aims with the comic element and the swift movement of the improvised comedy, and if he used this form for social satires of naturalistic technique and of daring aggressiveness.

This is especially true for his first two comedies, *die Geistlichen auf dem Lande* and *die Candidaten*. They were followed by two short farces, *der Teufel ein Bärenhäuter* and *Herzog Michel*. *Der blinde Ehemann* is a moralizing fairy comedy; and of *der glückliche Bankerottierer* we only have a short fragment. All these plays are in prose, with the exception of the two short farces.

Only the first two comedies may be considered as fair samples of Krüger's real ability and of his literary intentions.

The rest of his work owes its origin rather to commercial reasons, and shows, as Schmidt (*Chronologie*, p. 136) says of Krüger's translation of *le Philosophe marié* (by Destouches), "signs of haste and hunger."

I.

Die Geistlichen auf dem Lande. Ein Lustspiel in drey Handlungen. Zu finden in der Franckfurter und Leipziger Michaëlis-Messe, 1743.

Lessing in the 83rd *Stück* of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* says that Krüger wrote this play while still a pupil of the *Graues Kloster*. The plot of the piece is the traditional one of the French comedy. The stage directions¹ indicate that unity of time and of place are observed. The division into but three acts shows that Krüger does not pretend to offer a comedy of the Gottsched type.

In the opening scene we discover the country pastor, Muffel, coming from his garden and carrying lettuce and fruits in an apron. From a discussion he has with Cathrine, his *Haushälterin*, we at once become acquainted with the hopeless immorality of this coarse divine. He has seduced her and promises her a dowry of a hundred Thaler, which is to win her a husband. Peter, Muffel's *Hausknecht*, is her preference, and so Muffel tries to induce him to marry the girl. Visitors arrive, and, in order to receive them properly, Muffel leaves his two servants. Peter, in a little while, discovers the secret of the rather simple-minded Cathrine and refuses to consent to his own dishonor. Muffel returns, and, hearing the unexpected news of Peter's refusal, promises to find for Cathrine some poor student of divinity, for whom he will try to secure the vacant pastorate in a neighboring village. Meanwhile the first of Muffel's guests, Pastor Tempelstolz, enters. The plot of the comedy makes hardly

¹ "Der Schauplatz ist in Muffels Hause. Die Handlung ist an einem Nachmittage vor der Kirchmesse."

any progress during their following conversation which, in a dry, business-like fashion, concerns itself with the financial aspects of the clergyman's life, in the town and in the country. The first act thus closes, after having introduced to us these worthy representatives of the country clergy, and after having given but one part of the "exposition," that connected with Muffel's former life.

In the *Zweite Handlung* this exposition is completed, and the plot proper begins. Fräulein Wilhelmine, the daughter of Frau von Birkenhayn, is engaged in philosophical discussions with Herr Wahrmund, her former tutor. Both offer the most striking contrast to the ignorance and the coarseness of the clergy, and repeatedly declare themselves "von den geheimsten Vorurtheylen befreyet." We also are informed of the fact that the Fräulein's mother sides with the clergy and wishes to marry her daughter to Tempelstolz. The difference of rank is, in her mind, outbalanced by the good fortune of having a clergyman as son-in-law. But Fräulein Wilhelmine has the haughty contempt of a true rationalist for the pastor, and will never consent to this marriage. She declares, though, that difference of rank means nothing to her in the choice of a husband; and, encouraged by this, Wahrmund dares to propose to her. Both decide to ask Herr von Roseneck, Frau von Birkenhayn's brother, for assistance. He soon enters, together with his sister, who scandalized by some of von Roseneck's remarks, presently leaves the room. Wahrmund, in an allegorical story, tells Herr von Roseneck what has happened, and receives a promise of help. Frau von Birkenhayn returns to the room, and when the lovers leave her alone with her brother, he tells her of Wahrmund's love, but meets with a decided refusal, because Frau von Birkenhayn never will give her daughter to a philosopher. And thereupon she faints. This scene is suddenly interrupted by Fräulein Wilhelmine, who enters followed by Muffel and Tempelstolz. The latter tries to propose to her. An exceedingly farcical scene ensues, when

both clergymen are asked by Herr von Roseneck to assist him in taking care of the sick lady. Both, armed with enormous pipes and smoking zealously, take out their *Gebet-buch* and try to restore the lady's health by singing, praying, and smoking into her face. This treatment succeeds very quickly. While Tempelstolz is still occupied with her, Muffel turns to Fräulein Wilhelmine, and, blaming Tempelstolz's coarse manners, tries to win her love. After this the two *Pastoren* state that they are thirsty from the singing; they both leave, and with them goes Herr von Roseneck. While Frau von Birkenhayn now scolds her daughter for her lack of obedience and of religion, Muffel reënters, and, on his knees before the ladies, asks them to prefer him to Tempelstolz, who does not appreciate Fräulein Wilhelmine's high rank. Frau von Birkenhayn promises that she will leave her daughter free to choose between him and Tempelstolz, when the latter enters. He at once sees what is going on, and Frau von Birkenhayn now has to quiet the two clergymen's wrath by announcing to them that she will give her daughter's hand to whoever succeeds in converting her from the false doctrines of philosophy. Tempelstolz is forced to try first his persuasive powers. Left alone with the Fräulein, he blandly asks her to forswear philosophy, which he styles an inspiration of the devil. She answers with a decided "no," and, after explaining to him her ideas, leaves the room. Tempelstolz consoles himself by thinking that Muffel cannot have any better success. He still hopes to win her and "will pray for her next Sunday in church."

The third act interrupts the development of the plot by adding to the exposition a new element, which concerns Tempelstolz's private character. Brigitte, a sixty-five year old *Conrectors-Wittwe*, enters the door, which Peter opens. She asks for Tempelstolz and we hear that he has swindled the old woman out of all her money by promising marriage to her. Herr von Roseneck, attracted by the noise, appears and becomes acquainted with these facts about Tempelstolz's

life. Peter, encouraged by Roseneck's remarks, tells all he knows about Muffel. Wahrmond comes, and, after being informed of the facts, wishes to communicate them immediately to Frau von Birkenhayn. But Roseneck hinders him, saying that she never will believe them without proofs. So Brigitte is held in readiness in some hidden part of the house, whence she is to appear at the critical moment. Peter promises to find a way to denounce Muffel in an indisputable fashion. While thus the traps for the two clergymen are laid, Muffel enters laden with books, which he intends to use for Fräulein Wilhelmine's conversion. He is afraid Wahrmond will touch them and, by his profane influence, take from them their mystic power. Fräulein Wilhelmine enters and, at Muffel's request, all others withdraw. After a short but vain attempt to oppose reasoning against her philosophy, he becomes insolent, and tries to make love to her. When rebuked for this, he finally resorts to the means of exorcising the evil spirit from the Fräulein. In spite of her protests, he tells her that he saw how this spirit left her in a cloud; and he declares her converted. He leaves the room in triumph in order to announce to the others his victory. Roseneck immediately enters in order to comfort the Fräulein by telling her of his plot. Frau von Birkenhayn follows, and their dispute about the pretended conversion is interrupted by the entrance of the two quarrelling clergymen. Tempelstolz, furious about what he thinks his defeat, charges Muffel with violation of the law of the church by misquoting the formula of exorcism. Nevertheless Frau von Birkenhayn now proceeds to execute her promise and to reward Muffel with her daughter's hand. They are interrupted again by Cathrine who introduces Peter, disguised as a begging student of theology. Muffel, in a patronizing tone, promises the stranger a living and asks him to marry Cathrine. This latter request attracts Frau von Birkenhayn's attention, and a discussion of it follows, during which Peter reveals Muffel's secret. Muffel runs out of the room. Tempelstolz proudly now renews his claims, and feels

confident of victory. Then Brigitte appears, and in a scene very humiliating for Tempelstolz, he hears that she has secured a verdict of the *Consistorium*, that orders him to marry her. Frau von Birkenhayn is now sufficiently edified about the two clerical pretenders. She is healed of her "superstition"² and converted to "philosophy;" and so the comedy ends with Fräulein Wilhelmine's and Wahrmund's engagement.

Nearly everything in this plot is taken from the traditional form of the French comedy, as it had originated in the *commedia dell' arte*. In all these comedies we find that a father or a mother wishes to marry a daughter to a man of the parent's choice; and this choice is usually directed by reasons of money or by religious, social, or political partisanship. The man thus selected is unvariably either a worthless scoundrel or a grotesque clown, who amply deserves the girl's disgust or contempt. On the other hand, the young man whom the girl prefers is, if not a paragon of all virtues, at least endowed with all those qualities that would make him pleasant and brilliant in the eyes of every girl and of every indulgent reader. The loving couple is usually assisted by some relative of the girl's, her brother or her uncle, who at the same time fulfills the functions of the *raisonneur* of the play. By his assistance, but still more in consequence of an intrigue planned by a servant-girl and executed by a man servant, both of whom are devoted to the lovers, the worthless pretender is finally unmasked and, as a rule, mocked in the most cruel fashion. A disguise, in most cases, of the serving man, brings about very often this happy event. And the play thus ends with the union of the lovers.

There is no need to detail how far all these stock characters and stock motives occur in Krüger's play. Yet it may be interesting to trace its different parts back to distinct literary models.

Muffel's name is taken from Buchka's writings,¹ while his character directly descends from Molière's *Tartuffe*. This is especially noticeable in the scene where he behaves impu-

¹ Goedeke, *Grundriss*,² v. III, p. 356.

dently towards Fräulein Wilhelmine, while trying to convert her (see *Tartuffe*, III, 3).

But the real source of Krüger's play is, as Erich Schmidt indicates,¹ Frau Gottsched's *Pietistery im Fischbeinrocke*. Here we recognize Tempelstolz's character and his victim Brigitte in Magister Scheinfromm and Frau Ehrlichin, while Muffel's relations with Cathrine are identical to those between Scheinfromm and Frau Ehrlichin's daughter. To Frau von Birkenhayn, Fräulein Wilhelmine, Herr von Roseneck, and Wahrmond² further correspond Frau Glaubeleichtin, her daughter Luischen, her brother the Obrist Wackermann, and the lover Herr Liebmann. We find, however, that Krüger has limited the number of characters and of motives of Frau Gottsched's comedy, thus showing a strong and genuine instinct for the practical side of stagecraft. He has welded two persons, Magister Scheinfromm and his cousin Herr von Muckersdorf, into one, he has eliminated Herr Glaubeleicht, the girl's father, and so has disposed of a superfluous character and of the superfluous motive of dissention among the girl's parents. He has equally eliminated the person of Luischen's sister, Dorchen, and thus done away with the superfluous motive of jealousy between sisters. The accidents of the plot, therefore, happen among fewer people, and the plot becomes less involved. By further dropping all the different *Betschwestern* and all other persons connected with the pietists in Frau Gottsched's play, Krüger got rid of the very undramatic and tiresome scenes between Frau Glaubeleichtin and these persons. The main advantage gained by these transformations is that naturally all interest is, without any diversion, concentrated upon the clergymen's hypocrisy and upon the scheme to unmask them.³ And Krüger now was able to

¹ *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, v. 17.

² It has already been stated that Wahrmond is Krüger himself.

³ It is an interesting fact that Lessing in his early plays transformed his models or sources in a similar way, when he thought them encumbered with too many characters; so in the *Schatz* and the fragments *Der gute Mann* and *Der Leichtgläubige*.

furnish two representatives of the Tartuffe type, who by some kind of amusing contest try, in their quarrels and jealousy, to outdo each other in hypocrisy. By so doing he distributes the motives connected with Scheinfromm between Muffel and Tempelstolz. Scheinfromm's shameful conduct towards Frau Ehrlichin's daughter is allotted to Muffel, and Frau Ehrlichin's character and the way she introduces herself at the critical moment is reserved for Tempelstolz's case. Instead of Frau Ehrlichin's daughter, who is never seen on the stage in Frau Gottsched's play, Cathrine had to be Muffel's victim.¹

This latter transformation shows a curious departure from the traditional conception of the *suivante*. Instead of the quick-witted and sharp-tongued Lisette, we have a simple-minded country girl, whose ignorance has been shamefully abused. If we want literary models for her, we perhaps might compare this Cathrine to some of Holberg's servant-girls² who, without being in equally pathetic situations, yet are just as different from the Lisette type. The man-servant, Peter, is still less in accord with what one might call the Gottsched conception of this type. Even his name, which is the German equivalent for Pierrot,³ indicates his relation-

¹ Frau Gottsched's play is a translation and adaptation of Bougeant's *la Femme Docteur ou la Théologie Janseniste tombée en Quenouille*. (There is also a defense of this comedy against its critics, which is likewise attributed to Bougeant: *Arlequin Janseniste ou critique de la femme docteur. Comédie, à Cracovie chez Jean le Sincère. Imprimeur Perpetuel. MDCCXXXII. 8°*.) Bougeant's comedy is a combination of motives taken from Molière's *Tartuffe* and *les Femmes savantes*. It is interesting to see that Krüger eliminated from Frau Gottsched's play mostly persons or motives which can be traced back to *les Femmes savantes*, such as the jealousy between two uncongenial sisters, the discord between a reasonable husband and the mistaken wife, and others. On the other hand the example of Trissotin and of Vadius probably has influenced the characters of Muffel and Tempelstolz.

² For instance Annecke in *der politische Kannegiesser*. The name Cathrine occurs in Holberg's *das Arabische Pulver*; but there is no resemblance whatsoever to Krüger's character.

³ For this slightly disguised reintroduction of *Hanswurst*, see K. v. Görner, *Der Hanswurst-Streit in Wien*, Wien, 1884; and Creizenach, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des neueren deutschen Lustspiels*, Halle, 1879, p. 27.

ship with the good old *Arlequino di Bergamo*. He not only fulfills the traditional rôle in the disguise plot but he also, by his fear of ghosts and by similar *lazzi*, plays the *Hanswurst's* part, just as Holberg's Heinrichs do.¹ And not only Peter and his jokes or grimaces, but the savory and perhaps low-toned character of other comical passages distinctly suggests Holberg's example. The opening scene, showing Muffel with an apron and laden with vegetables and fruit; the nursing of the fainting Frau von Birkenhayn; the exorcism scene: all this is so drastic and grotesque as to find no parallel in French comedy of the eighteenth century outside the Théâtre de la Foire. Only the great Danish playwright in those days, and, earlier than that, Molière and Regnard, attempted as much (for instance in *le Malade imaginaire* or *le Légataire universel*).

But the chief merit of the comedy is that it tries to give a naturalistic picture of real life and a criticism of tendencies prevailing at the poet's time in his own country. And it gives a special interest to his satire, that it is written from the extreme standpoint of rationalism—that of the *Philosoph*. The charges thus brought against the clergy are numerous and grave. Krüger says that the country clergy is ignorant, coarse, and given to vice and brutish luxury. Their main occupation is to smoke, to drink *Doppelbier*, to plough their fields, and to cultivate their kitchen-garden. Their ignorance is only equalled by their arrogance and their impudent hypocrisy. "Most parsons pretend to know secrets; but in fact their only secret is their ignorance." It is said that the main duty of a pastor's wife is to know how to keep silent and how to lie. The city clergy, while less coarse, is said to be equally corrupt. And the result of these lamentable conditions is summed up in the following words: "Arrogance, hypocritical deceitfulness, and shameful ignorance are in them, as teachers of the unruly populace, the more culpable, since they create worse havoc than would be wrought by serious

¹ Once, also, Peter; see Prutz, Holberg, p. 294.

crimes, which disappear with the death of the criminal." These are sweeping statements, made in that uncompromising, haughty way which we already know to be Krüger's. But it seems as if, terrible as they are, they were not far from truth in those times. For their confirmation one need not go to the perhaps somewhat untrustworthy autobiographies of men like Bahrdt or Laukhard, although most of their stories are probably true. Even the gentle, timid Rabener tells instances of the incredible corruption, ignorance and coarseness of the country clergy in the Germany of those days.¹ And so we need not be astonished if Uz is delighted by Krüger's first comedy and if Gleim says that in spite of the "grober Scherz" he likes it; for "indessen sind viele Wahrheiten deutsch gesagt."²

Krüger's standpoint is that of the "Philosophen." His Wahrmund, Wilhelmine and von Roseneck are not, like the members of the pietistic group, "hübsch unvernünftig." They are not like Muffel and Tempelstolz, who "sind keine Philosophen; sie glauben hübsch, was die Alten geglaubt haben, sie läugnen die nothwendigsten Dinge zur Seligkeit nicht, als da sind die Gespenster, die Hexen und den Teufel." On the other hand, the philosophers know how to eliminate the inventions of the clergy in the traditional religion, and they know also how "ein höchstes Wesen vernünftig zu verehren." As to their political ideas, it is clear that for them difference of rank, as prevailing in those days of the *ancien régime*, is based on prejudice, and that only the degree of *Aufklärung* to which people have attained gives them their value and real rank. Fräulein Wilhelmine declares that she never would hesitate to recognize Wahrmund, her former tutor, as her equal, since his personal qualities entitle him to such a recognition.

These ideas have some resemblance to the principles of the

¹ Rabener, ed. Ortlepp, Stuttgart, 1839, v. III, pp. 29 ff.

² *Briefwechsel zwischen Gleim und Uz*, Hersg. von Schüddekopt (Bibliothek des litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, v. 218), Tübingen, 1899, p. 61.

French revolution.¹ And as soon as Krüger had published his comedy, it was confiscated even in Berlin. The authorities had no sympathy with this violent outcry of "écrasez l'infâme;" but, as Gleim says in the letter already quoted, the play had an excellent but secret sale, and soon there was a rumor (March 29, 1744) that *three editions* were already exhausted. It is only natural that this play never appeared on the stage. Yet its violent aggression gave origin to a rather weak and confused answer by an unknown author: *Verbesserungen und Zusätze des Lustspiels Die Geistlichen auf dem Lande in Zweien Handlungen samt dessen Nachspiel. Zu finden in der Franckfurter und Leipziger Michaelis Messe, 1744.* The author of these *Verbesserungen und Zusätze* tells in the introduction that Krüger had given him the manuscript of the *Geistlichen auf dem Lande*, and that he, without knowing the objectionable character of the play, had given it to the printer. If he had read it before, the author adds, he would not have refused to Krüger the great service of destroying "eine so scheussliche Bruth." He pretends that Krüger wrote the play out of disappointment and jealousy, when he had seen that he never would succeed in his study of divinity. The spirit of the whole thing can best be seen by the following passage in the introduction: "Man sollte vielmehr, ie ansehnlicher der Vorwurf eines Standes, ie nöthiger und nützlicher er in der Gesellschaft der Menschen ist; mit desto grösserer Sorgfalt, die Fehltritte seiner einzelnen Glieder bedecken. Es verbindet uns ia dazu die gesunde Vernunft, vielmehr die Offenbarung, ia der Nutzen und Schaden, so unsere Mitbürger dahero nehmen können."

The main plot is a series of dialogues; for it is impossible to see how it could be called a play "in zweien Handlungen." Incidentally everybody but the clergy is blamed. Yet the

¹ Cf. Nicolai, *Briefe über den itzigen Zustand*, etc., p. 24 (of the preface): "Es gehet dem Wort ästhetisch fast ebenso wie dem Wort philosophisch, vor zwanzig und mehreren Jahren. Es war genung, einem (!) zum Kezzer in der Theologie zu machen, wenn man sagte: Er denkt philosophisch."

author's wrath is concentrated upon the *Freymaurer*, of whom it is said: "Fressen und Saufen wird wohl ihre einzige Absicht sein;" and upon the freethinkers or *Philosophen*. A pitiful specimen of this kind,—Espritfort is his name,—is introduced, and his nonsensical talk is constantly refuted.¹

Later on, Christlob Mylius wrote an imitation of Krüger's *Geistlichen* called *die Ärzte*. Lessing speaks of it in his *Vorrede zu den vermischten Schriften des Herrn Christlob Mylius*.

II.

The *technique* of this first comedy shows a good deal of natural ability. The way the author introduces his characters,—Muffel, for instance,—in a grotesque scene is perfectly natural and very effective. His distribution of the exposition throughout all the three acts has no doubt the same fortunate result as, for example, Lessing's exposition in *Minna von Barnhelm*, where the real nature of Major von Tellheim's embarrassments is only told in the sixth scene of the fourth act.

Yet there is one defect in this comedy; namely, the pretentious and doctrinaire tone in which the characters expose the author's views on religion and society. It is to this side of it that Jördens' criticism applies: "In seinem Dialog herrscht noch allzuviel müssiges Geschwätz." Or, as the critic of the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften* puts it: "Die Personen sind zu geschwätzig und äussern sich mehr in Worten als in Handlungen, die feinen Schattierungen fehlen ihnen, sie deklamieren, wo sie reden sollen, und reden sich immer so sehr aus, dass ihnen nichts zu sagen übrig bleibt."

¹ The *Verbesserungen und Zusätze* are remarkable for their curious and archaic style: Latin words have their Latin declension; *wann* is always used in the sense of "if;" *trucken* (= *trocken*), p. 71; *die Besessung der Weltweisheit*, p. 118; *dich (!) zum Brode verhelfen*, p. 86; *die Fräulein* (feminine), p. 92; *der Schnupftuch*, p. 131; *die hessliche (!) Beynahmen* (plural), p. 87, *absturb*, p. 87; *die Patronen* (plural), p. 88.

There is, however, a great improvement as to this in Krüger's second comedy: *Die Candidaten, oder, die Mittel zu einem Amte zu gelangen*, ein Lustspiel in 5 Handlungen, den 5 Februar 1748 in Braunschweig zum erstenmal aufgeführt.

By adopting the five-act partition, Krüger shows his aspiration to high literary standing. Unity of time and place are observed: "Der Schauplatz ist in des Grafen Pallaste."

The plot of the comedy turns upon the intrigues by which different solicitors try to obtain a *Ratsherrnstelle*, for which "der Graf" has the right of appointment.

In the first act we make the acquaintance of one of the candidates for the situation, Hermann, "des Grafen Sekretarius." Although he is especially fit for the place, there are several things that stand in his way. His "übertriebene Liebe zur Wahrheit," as Caroline, "der Gräfinn Kammerjungfer," calls it, hinders him from flattering the old, coquettish "Gräfinn," whose support he so loses. On the other hand, the ignorant count needs his services as secretary too much to grant him the advancement to the desired situation. Another obstacle emerges. Arnold, "Hofmeister der Söhne des Grafen," proposes to Caroline, who is engaged to Hermann. He bluntly tells her that he would like to marry her in order to concede to the count his rights as a husband, and adds that, as a reward for this, he will receive a pastorate from the count. Caroline's refusal shows him that her love for Hermann is likely to prevent the count's and his own intentions. He, therefore, advises the count not to place Hermann so as to enable him to marry.

In the second act two new candidates appear; both are equally unfit for the place, but are also equally well protected, the one by the count, the other by the countess. The countess promises her support to one Valer, whose flatteries and bold manners please her coquettish old age. The count's candidate is Chrysander, "ein Licentiat." He has never studied, and has purchased his degree from a poor relative; he is rich and ignorant; and he only applies for the situation in order

to comply with his *fiancée's* desire for an official title. He presents the count with a filled purse and promises naïvely to send this *fiancée* to the palace. This, of course, wins him the count's favor, who thus shows quite a different character from the honest old man in Gellert's fable, *Der Kandidat*.

The third act reveals, however, the true character of Valer. He is only disguised as a candidate. In reality he is the "Fähndrich von Wirbelbach." His colonel received a public insult from the countess when alluding to her rather advanced age. In order to mortify her, the *Fähndrich* has to win her grace under the disguise of a candidate, and finally to refuse the situation, when offered to him. His varlet, Johann, who plays the part of the *lustige Person*, is dispatched to inquire about the chambermaid's personality. Von Wirbelbach thinks he knows her, but is not able to place her. Johann therefore tries to obtain information from Caroline herself, when the count appears and forces him to hide under the table. He so becomes witness of a scene in which the count, in vain, tries to corrupt Caroline's virtue. Finally disturbed by Johann, he has to desist from these attempts. Arnold's plan to estrange the lovers by slander, fails after a short misunderstanding.

In Act IV Chrysander consults Johann. He is tortured by jealousy. Taking Johann's advice, he intends to hide with him behind a screen, in order to hear the count's interview with his *fiancée*. After this Valer appears again in his successful courtship of the countess. She declines to intercede in Hermann's favor, on account of his upright stubbornness and his unpoliteness.

Johann and Chrysander (Act V), concealed behind the screen, witness the interview between the count and Christinchen, which shows to the astounded Licenciat a degree of corruption he never before dreamed of. The arrival of the countess, however, puts an end to that scene, and the count tries to hide the girl behind the same screen where Johann and Chrysander already are. The confusion caused by this defeats

Chrysander as well as his protector. The countess triumphantly prepares for using in Valer's favor her just acquired advantage over her husband, when the Fähndrich discloses his intrigue. The countess, however, is saved from ridicule by Caroline, who proves herself to be von Wirbelbach's cousin. Reverses of fortune, for which her family was not responsible, have forced her to enter the countess's service, although she belongs to the nobility. She declares, in spite of von Wirbelbach's advice, that she will keep fidelity to Hermann, who finally gets the office.

Here again the plot as well as the characters are conventional and, in several instances, can be traced back to literary sources. Johann is Arlequin, and several comical situations remind us of Holberg's plays. Johann hides under a table, like the *Kannegiesser* or as Corfitz in the *Wochenstube*. And the rôle played by the screen in the *Wochenstube* is not without similarity to the one in our comedy.

Yet if we compare this comedy to the *Geistlichen auf dem Lande*, we find that it contains some new elements. To the primitive stock of the Italo-French comedy that of the *comédie larmoyante* is added. Caroline very closely reminds us of Orphise in Madame de Graffigny's *Cénie*. Orphise, although a noble lady, has been obliged by poverty and misfortune to enter Dorimond's service as Cénie's gouvernante. It greatly contributes to her unhappiness that she has lost sight of her husband and daughter, who, however, are discovered at the end of the play. Cénie herself is Orphise's daughter. But there is one important difference between Krüger and what we might call his model. Clerval, in Madame de Graffigny's play, offers to marry Cénie, although he is still ignorant whether or not she is of noble birth. But the kindness of fate prevents a *mésalliance*. Cénie is Clerval's equal. Krüger's Hermann is a commoner without any secret affiliation with the nobility; and, just as in the *Geistlichen auf dem Lande*, a *mésalliance* of the most shocking type takes place.

This shows that the social satire of the *Candidaten* is the

same as that of the first play. In his second comedy Krüger gives a picture of the social habits of the *ancien régime* with its favoritism and its corruption. In two striking instances he shows how the unworthy and the unfit are more apt than the virtuous and able to obtain the favors of a corrupt aristocracy. This aristocracy, while shamefully misusing its privileges, is engaged in a vicious pursuit of pleasure, disregarding as well the public interest as the indisputable rights of the individual. As to the ignorance of this class, the count's choice of an instructor for his sons is sufficiently characteristic. And he explicitly shows how low his literary taste is, when he asks Arnold to read with his boys, not the "Beyträge zum Verstande des Witzes" as he calls it, but "einen guten Roman von Menantes oder Celandern, woraus sie lernen können, wie sie mit den Damen umgehen müssen."

The best known satire of the nobility and clergy under the *ancien régime* is Beaumarchais's *Mariage de Figaro*; and it is remarkable how closely our comedy resembles the French play, although the latter was written some thirty years later. Krüger's "Graf" is the same brutal seducer as "le comte d'Almaviva," his relations to the "Gräfinn" bear the same troubled character as d'Almaviva's; except that Krüger does not spare the lady. Figaro and Suzanne depend upon the *comte* d'Almaviva's good will as much as Hermann and Caroline upon that of the *Graf*. The way in which the countesses get advantage of their husbands is the same in both plays. Even single scenes are closely similar. Johann witnessing the count's misbehavior towards Caroline is reminiscent of Chérubin hidden behind his chair; and the *comte* d'Almaviva's discovery of the page, when he tries to hide himself, and the series of misunderstandings in the scene near the two pavilions bear many traits of similarity with the scenes behind the screen.

Yet there is a difference between the brilliant wit and swift movement of the French play and the stern and sweeping but less elegant assertions of Krüger's comedy. This divergency

is significantly incarnated in the two respective characters of Figaro and Hermann. Figaro is the French Scapin, whose wit and inventiveness are never at a loss. Krüger's Hermann is the melancholy portrait of the poet himself. He has his "sehr mittelmässige Gabe, sich beliebt zu machen" and seems equally "ganz vom Glück verlassen" (Jördens). He has the "Heftigkeit, mit pathetischem Stolz und mit einem edelen Trieb verbunden" which the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften* attributes to Krüger's appearance as an actor. The *Candidaten* was often played.¹

III.

In 1742 Krüger had joined Schöнемann's troupe where he was busy in his double capacity as actor and author chiefly of *Vorspiele*. The rest of his literary activity was now inspired by practical reasons: we see it expressly stated of his translations of Marivaux's plays and of Destouches's *le Philosophe marié*; and we are permitted to divine it in respect to his original plays, if we consider the fact that after the *Candidaten* Krüger entirely abandons the satirical comedy of manners and altogether falls short of what had been at least the literary pretensions of the first part of his career.

*Der Teufel ein Bärenhäuter*² is called by Krüger ein Lustspiel von einer Handlung. It consists of two separate plots, which, although of opposite character, are welded into one action. One plot is of a farcical nature and reminds us of the gay frivolity of the *fabliaux* or early *novelle*, while the other is apparently derived from the stock of the *comédie larmoyante*. There are, besides, still other traces of "haste and hunger," as for instance the inconsistency of one of the main characters, Wilhelm Rabe, whose business morals are

¹ Cf. R. Hodermann, *Geschichte des Gotha'schen Hoftheaters*, p. 173 (Litzmann, *Theatergeschichtliche Forschungen*, v. ix); and Hans Devrient, *J. F. Schöнемann* (Litzmann, *Th. F.*, v. xi), p. 373.

² "Zum ersten Mal den 27. May, 1748, in Breslau aufgeführt."

sometimes rather irreconcilable with the humane kindness and readiness to forgive, which this paragon of virtue soon afterwards displays.

This Wilhelm Rabe is a prosperous farmer. But, in spite of his success, he is unhappy on account of his wife's indifference to him. Forced by her parents, Hannchen has married Wilhelm and has abandoned her former true lover, Valentin. Since the latter left the village in despair, enlisted as a soldier, Wilhelm has never seen his wife contented, except when she received news from her absent lover. Wilhelm is worried by this fact; yet he forgives her and shows the same sort of kindness as does Nivelles de la Chaussée's Constance in *le Préjugé à la mode*.¹ He thinks and acts along the lines expressed in the last words of Madame de Graffigny's *Cécile*: "Si l'excessive bonté est quelque fois trompée, elle n'est pas moins la première des vertus." Fortunately, however, this patience wins for him first his wife's respect and finally even her love. Therefore, when Valentin returns, she refuses to permit herself to be led astray by his requests. She even readily communicates to him her respect and admiration for Wilhelm Rabe's magnanimous character. So far our Lustspiel may be said to be a *comédie larmoyante*. But here the farce enters. Wilhelm's suspicions have been aroused by the *Küster* Ruthe. He, therefore, has listened in hiding to Hannchen's and Valentin's conversation, and now interrupts them in order to express his gratitude. The harmony thus established among the three causes them to plan a punishment for Ruthe's slander. It had been formerly understood by Ruthe and Wilhelm, that Ruthe under the disguise of the devil, should appear before Valentin and thus scare him out of Wilhelm's house. Valentin, who now is informed of this plan, waits for Ruthe, while the other two withdraw. Ruthe appears in his costume, and Valentin whips him, ties his hands and feet, and then leaves him lying helplessly on the ground. While Ruthe

¹Also Mme de Graffigny, *Cécile*; III, 2: "Obtenons tout par la tendresse et rien par l'autorité."

now gives vent to his fears of the real devil, who might come and punish his impudence, Ruthe's own wife Anna and his Knecht Peter enter. A love-scene between these two follows, and both agree that it is a source of particular gratification to them thus to deceive Ruthe. The unhappy *Küster* is not only forced thus to witness his own shame, but soon Anna and Peter, taking him for a block, sit down on him¹ in the darkness. Their tender conversation is interrupted by Ruthe's irate cries. The lovers leave, frightened; and in their place appear Wilhelm, Hannchen and Valentin, the last carrying a lantern. Ruthe is forced to repeat a formula of apology, which Valentin dictates to him. When the passage occurs, which relates to his slander of Hannchen, she slaps him in the face. He then is freed and the play closes with a "*Divertissement*" in verse.² Each person has one couplet, and each couplet discusses whether the devil is a *Bärenhäuter*. The last couplet is addressed to the audience, and contains the traditional "plaudite, amici," saying how hard it is to please after "Voltär, Detousch und Molier."

Thus *der Teufel ein Bärenhäuter* is nothing but an indiscriminating mixture of the stock jokes of the Franco-Italian comedy with the sentimental virtuousness of the *comédie larmoyante*. The two elements are as contrary to each other as possible; but their union undoubtedly must have been a successful speculation upon the literary taste of the theatre-goer of those days.

IV.

Not greater is Krüger's merit in the *Herzog Michel, ein Lustspiel von einer Handlung in Versen*. This play was very popular during the eighteenth century, and Goethe in Leipzig still acted in it.³ But as Lessing says: "Vom Herzog Michel

¹ Cf. Holberg, *Jean de France*, V, 2 (Prutz, p. 347).

² These *Divertissements* correspond to the *Vaudeville* at the end of the French comedies of the time, or to the verses with which Holberg closes his plays.

³ *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Buch 2, Kap. 7 (*W. A.*, v. 27, p. 116).

brauche ich wohl nichts zu sagen. Auf welchem Theater wird er nicht gespielt, und wer hat ihn nicht gesehen oder gelesen? Krüger hat indess das wenigste Verdienst darum; denn er ist ganz aus einer Erzählung in den Bremischen Beiträgen genommen. Die vielen guten satirischen Züge, die er enthält gehören jenem Dichter, sowie der ganze Verfolg der Fabel, Krügern gehört nichts als die dramatische Form." This is the exact truth concerning the *Herzog Michel*. Krüger has taken J. E. Schlegel's tale, *das ausgerechnete Glück*, and has dramatized it by changing but a few lines. He only adds Hannchen's father, a character which he uses for the exposition.¹

V.

Of the two remaining comedies, one, "*Der glückliche Bankrottierer*" is a short fragment. All that can be said about it, is, that it absolutely copies the traditional stock figures, plot, motives, and intrigues of the *commedia dell'arte*. In fact, it looks like one of the Italian outlines in completed form.

Der blinde Ehemann combines all the successful elements of the Italian fairy comedy with the never-failing moralizing sentimentalism of the *comédie larmoyante*. Its plot is briefly this: Astrobäl, Laura's blind husband, is told by his neighbor Crispin that he is a son of the deceased prince and that the fairy Oglyvia, the prince's wife, has blinded him out of jealousy. Thus the present prince is Astrobäl's half-brother. But the attention he devotes to Astrobäl is apparently due

¹ The last lines of the play, which are Krüger's, remind one of a passage in Marivaux' *la Double inconstance*. Michel says to Hannchen: "Du bist mein Herzogthum, mein Bier, mein Schweinebraten." In Marivaux (*Théâtre choisi de Marivaux*, publié par F. de Marescot et D. Joaust, Paris, 1881, v. 1, p. 27) the passage is as follows: "*Trivelin*, Que vous auriez bû du bon vin, que vous auriez mangé de bons morceaux!—*Arlequin*, J'en suis fâché; mais il n'y a rien à faire. Le cœur de Silvia est un morceau encore plus friand que tout cela." This change from the words of the conventional Arlequin to those of Michel is characteristic both of Krüger's realism and of his somewhat crude style. The name of Hannchen's father, Andrews, is of course taken from Richardson's *Pamela*.

mainly to the latter's beautiful and virtuous wife, Laura, who opposes to all the persuasion and enticement of the prince an uncompromising and loquacious virtue. Crispin's wife, Florine, is rather different. To her usually drunken husband she prefers the prince's valet Marottin, who is mute and therefore, as she says, never squanders his time by gossiping. When Laura has resisted the prince's last attempt upon Astrobal's happiness, an old oracle has been fulfilled, which says that Oglyvia will regain her former beauty, when, "through her son's misfortune, Astrobal will have been made the happiest husband." She not only appears in all her glory, but by virtue of the same oracle his eye-sight is restored to Astrobal. The comedy is full of comical scenes and amusing tricks, mostly performed by Crispin, Marottin, or Florine. They all belong to the stock of the Italian comedy, and probably could be traced back to some old Italian *novella* or French *fabliau*. The whole comedy is an indiscriminate mixture of these jokes and a rather trivial and verbose virtuousness, both of which elements the audiences of those days always appreciated.

Lessing mentions Krüger several times. In the *Vorrede zu den vermischten Schriften des Herrn Christlob Mylius*, he says some strong things against *Die Geistlichen auf dem Lande*. But he at once adds that Krüger is a writer, "der aber nach der Zeit bessere Ansprüche auf den Ruhm eines guten komischen Dichters der Welt vorlegte." And in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* we read: "Doch hat wirklich unsere Bühne an Krügern viel verloren. Er hatte Talent zum niedrig Komischen, wie seine Candidaten beweisen. Wo er aber rührend und edel sein will, ist er frostig und affectiert."¹ We have seen what that means, and where this affectation and doctrinaire tone come from.

But there is no doubt that Krüger's first two comedies are among the best products of the German stage before Lessing. They treat purely national problems with a good deal of

¹ 83rd Stück.

resemblance to life; their humor and wit, if they are not always refined, are at least always comical and convincing, and somewhat on the same line as Holberg's. Their vivacity and unconventionality are more impressive than, for instance, the well-behaved timidity of Schlegel's *Stumme Schönheit* or Weisse's *Poeten nach der Mode*, not to mention trifles like Romanus's *Crispin als Kammerdiener, Vater und Schwiegervater*. Their tendency is narrow and doctrinaire, even a little fanatical; but that means at least that they defend an original standpoint and are not of this concentrated harmlessness which becomes so offensive in Gellert's or Weisse's comedies. Altogether we are fairly well entitled to say that the German stage really lost much in Krüger; and if we consider, as Jördens does, "was Krüger unter der schweren Last der Arbeit, die ihn als Schauspieler drückte, unter der noch traurigeren Beschwerde eines dahin welkenden Körpers, bei der stäten Veränderung des Aufenthalts, bei den mühseligen Übersetzungen, die er übernehmen musste, um nur etwas über seinen dürftigen Gehalt zu gewinnen, dennoch geleistet hat, so wird man leicht schliessen können, was er unter gegenseitigen, glücklichen Umständen, bei reiferen Jahren, geprüfterer Erfahrung noch vielleicht geleistet haben würde."

ALBERT HAAS.